

Seattle Pedestrian Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

WEDNESDAY, January 10 2007

6PM-8PM, City Hall L280

1. Call to order and introductions (6:00)

SPAB members in attendance: Chris Tachibana (Board Secretary), T. Frick McNamara, Ben Smith, Celeste Gilman, Sarah Ross-Viles, Fiona McCargo (Get Engaged), Peg Staeheli, Rob Fellows

Absent: Jodie Vice (Chair), Jean Healy, Howard Wu

SDOT staff liaison: Megan Hoyt

Presenter: Barbara Gray, SDOT Pedestrian Policy and Planning

Public: Albert Gerard

2. Approval of December minutes (6:05)

3. Pedestrian Master Plan Discussion led by Barbara Gray and Pedestrian Master Plan committee (6:10)

Barbara Gray reported that the scope is being discussed. SPAB is involved as key advisors and resources. In progress are reviews of model plans and internal policy work. SPAB was asked what we see as measures of success.

One analysis tool is the bike plan, with a 10-year plan on the percent coverage of arterial lanes and the entire system. Pedestrian plans reviewed that were rated exemplary by U. North Carolina include Boulder CO, Cambridge MA and Denver CO.

1. Denver plan features less measures of success and more "next steps" (a more policy-level plan). The plan aimed to make people want to be on the sidewalk, to make them "psychologically comfortable".

2. San Diego plan features design guide with no outcome-based measures.

3. Portland has a 20-year plan with articulate, thought-out systems and networks. Focus is on safety, easy access, connectedness, ease of use, and economy. Plan contains system performance indicators, classification is by street and individual districts and envisions both the small and big picture.

4. Oakland plan from 2002 identifies route systems, features land-use, implementation and education.

5. Phoenix plan promotes and guides land use, features educational programs, funding, lateral separation and performance guidelines. Provisions are made for future development. The plan is specific to the region's character.

All plans talked about designing for people and a network with emphasis on linkages, and ties back to Land use strategy (like Urban Villages in Seattle). The Phoenix plan has the most specific performance guidelines, includes latent demand (anticipating needs), has a pedestrian level of service and addresses lateral separation (greenspace).

Peg listed other cities' master plans she looked at and said the committee also considered looking for European plans to get new ideas and thoughts like like why New Yorkers walk and have positive attitudes toward walking and how this affects fitness. She said all considered plans are compilations of other plans and might not fit Seattle.

Ben asked about Canadian cities. Peg, Ben, Megan and Barbara discussed a few, like Vancouver's new plan, and said we might have a contact for information from Toronto.

In general comments, Ben said the committee wants a balanced plan with both projects and policy. Previously, pedestrian facilities were extra allocations. SDOT is now developing a point system for sidewalk priorities and we need more of this.

Peg said the committee suggested a 3-6-9-20 year plan to match Bridging the Gap and also have long-term effect. The Ped plan needs more money than the bike master plan to have an impact and has a larger magnitude, reaching across the city and population.

Barbara said the city is set up to make ped decisions in several different places. Policies regarding design guidelines, regulatory codes, open spaces, etc. are now being pulled together. We also need get outside input, and get the projects into their proper agencies without diluting the impact. Another concern is how to address issues we don't control like Metro, police training, driver training.

Celeste said pedestrian issues touch on so many different departments, we need to be sure to reinforce connections in order to get the outcome we want.

Barbara agreed that the system and organizations must be in place to carry out the plan.

Rob said policy is important but it must have a definite project list at the end. The comprehensive plan has elements like direct spending for pedestrian features, but we need to focus on implementation and defining specific projects (e.g. public, private, pedestrian, drainage) so gaps can be defined and filled.

Barbara said we rely on partners in private development to use proper design standards. She and Rob discussed the best use of time and resources, the scale of the plan, how to make it comprehensible. Megan said the plan could show all people involved what to be working on and placing elements where they can be addressed. Barbara said everyone should be in agreement on pedestrian safety and design and this project could bring them together.

T said the plan should address design that encourages walking in addition to safety.

Peg suggested a review of current policies to see how they could be modified, instead of writing new policy. Barbara said we could both add policy from other plans and address conflicting policies. Some conflicts were addressed with the ROW manual. Megan said solving the conflicts can help focus on outcome.

Peg said one issue on the committee's list is training and education, which addresses different departments and issues. For example, changes in driver and walker training.

Barbara said we should shy away from issues that affect the state.

Rob, speaking as a community council person, would like to include completing sidewalks in the larger vision. The plan should offer a way to interface with the budget and get information about projects.

Barbara said the CIP has a list of projects matched to policy, but would like to make that stronger.

Celeste asked what would be useful in the next round from SPAB. Barbara said a discussion in the next meeting on scope elements. SPAB could look critically at current policy on design guidelines, the strategic plan and ROW and define scope issues, outcomes, reasonable measurements.

Megan said a sidewalk inventory is happening to get more hard data. It won't be done before beginning of the plan. Data collecting and scope elements were discussed. System completion is an element, so baseline needs to be defined.

Rob said the Master Plan subcommittee would put something together

Ben asked about timeline for the plan. Barbara said a year from the time we have an agreed-upon scope.

T, Peg and Megan discussed defining goals and deadlines. They agreed that the next meeting can focus on an advisory letter and defining goals. T suggested starting with reviewing deficiencies and examples (and what's lacking in the examples) more closely. The next meeting was set.

4. 2007 Goals and Priorities (7:00)

The last meeting redefined committees. Celeste passed around the list so people could review assignments.

The civic engagement committee is new, so its definition was discussed. Ben said it has the usual issue of project or policy-oriented. Peg, T and Fiona discussed having members at meetings, like design commission meetings to direct focus on pedestrian use. Rob said the goal is to try to understand who needs advising and providing that advice in an engaging way. Celeste said the subcommittee could strategize ways address this. Peg suggested talking to community councils. A meeting will happen soon.

5. Round Robin (7:15)

Sarah said Franklin and Eastlake has a new traffic calming circle that was unexpected and the community council didn't know where it came from. Rob and Megan said they often come through an ad-hoc grant through the Department of Neighborhoods with funding from Bridging the Gap.

T Frick is stopping a neighbor from parking vehicles for sale at an intersection where they block sightlines. She said recently while driving in

the rain and dark on Admiral, even when looking for crosswalks, had difficulty seeing them. Peg, Megan and T discussed the color and elevation cues, and if they are work. She and Jodie talked about responding to city council, and is setting a meeting with Drago and Steinbrueck. She has waterfront plans, which we'll review after the council meeting

Rob walked down First Ave recently, crossing Atlantic/Edgar Martinez with a confusing signal for permissive left turns where cars do not obey the progression of signals. Pedestrians get a walk signal but cars don't observe it. Ben, Megan and Peg discussed other, similar crossings. Peg asked if SDOT could present about signals and it can be addressed by the Ped Master Plan.

Peg was in New Orleans in December. A lot of spot improvements are occurring, but corridors and a less fragmented approach are generally more important for connecting community. Walking after the recent power outage in Seattle made her appreciate being able to trust sidewalks and crossing and lighting.

Fiona met with Get Engaged and Ben coordinated with them and talking with the council about design improvements. She thinks we need more driver education, because she has noticed that a lot of cars stop at red lights then slide through.

Ben has been training for STP so has the bike and running perspective. He's had contact with the crossing flag people and has noticed large flags at the Admiral crosswalk where the fatality occurred. He travelled around the New Orleans area in August. He's going to the Colman Dock meeting.

Celeste noticed the new Yesler and 3rd crosswalks are getting destroyed by, probably, bus chains. T said she's heard the thermoplastic gets slippery. Peg said there's another possible product but maybe there was an application problem. Other plans were discussed and might go into the Master Plan. Celeste is working with Langley, which has 60 people out of a population of 1000 engaged in street planning. She asked for resources.

Chris thanks Howard, Celeste, T and others who did minutes while she was gone. She observed and heard about pedestrian issues in Copenhagen, Helsinki, Tallinn, Oslo and Hyderabad. Hyderabad has no crosswalks or lights. Oslo and Helsinki have wide streets and long blocks but ped-friendly features like cut-throughs. Helsinki's wide street with streetcar was discussed and how it might translate to Seattle.

Re; Hyderabad, Sarah said she was helped across a chaotic street in Hanoi by a small, elderly, confident, local woman.

6. Upcoming Agenda Items (7:40)

Possible topics and speakers are John Arnesen of the Thomas Street Overpass, which needs to be Feb or March; Barbara Gray next month; Report on Option C from Mayor Greg Nickels; Waterfront report, depending on if there will be a viaduct vote and other late-breaking events.

7. Public Comment (7:50)

Al Gerard said the Master Plan is long-term, so don't lose focus on what can be done now, like making sidewalks pleasant and comfortable with benches, improving those walk signals that come on only every other cycle. He suggested public hearings rather than addressing the city council. He said Naples has no traffic or pedestrian rules. Rob said Greenwood has a bench program. Al asked the Mayor about benches in Freeway Park. They have recently been added, in a version that can't be slept on. He has also asked the Mayor about free apartments for homeless.

8. Adjourn (8:00)